

Tom Horne
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ARIZONA RELEASES SCHOOL PROFILES. HORNE SAYS STATE SYSTEM IS BEST WAY TO DETERMINE SCHOOL QUALITY

FINAL ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FIGURES ALSO RELEASED

(PHOENIX) October 15, 2003 – Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne today released the public school profiles for all Arizona schools as defined under the “Arizona Learns” (AZ Learns) classifications.

Under this formula, 128 schools achieved the rating of “Excelling,” 165 schools are regarded as “Highly Performing,” 663 schools have been labeled “Performing,” and 150 schools are rated as “Underperforming.”

Under the federal formula, 72 percent of schools made adequate yearly progress (“AYP” and 28 percent did not. “We have worked hard to make the state system fair and accurate, and I would rely on the state system in judging schools,” Horne said. “Under the federal system, there are 144 ways for schools to fail. A school that excels in 143, and falls short in one, still fails to make AYP. The state system is more comprehensive and more fair.”

The AZ Learns definitions are listed below:

- **Excelling:** A school that demonstrates optimal student performance.
- **Highly Performing:** A school that exceeds the state’s expectations with regard to student proficiency in reaching the state’s academic standards, and has a predetermined number of students exceeding the standard.
- **Performing:** A school that meets the state’s expectations with regard to student proficiency in reaching the state’s academic standards.
- **Underperforming:** A school in need of improvement in its academic performance.
- **Failing to Meet Academic Standards:** A school receiving three consecutive underperforming classifications that have been confirmed by site review.

“The most important factor is not how many schools there are in each category, but rather what are we doing to make sure that all students become proficient in every academic area. This is the main focus of our activities. We are sending solutions teams to every underperforming school, to help increase the number of proficient students in those schools, and to help the schools avoid being labeled as failing schools. We have held, and will continue to hold, conferences for schools on best practices, so that all of our schools will implement those practices that have been found to be most effective, so that all of our students become proficient in the academic areas, and so that those students that are capable of exceeding proficiency, will do so to the maximum extent of their academic abilities.”

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